

Contributions

OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO THE PAST

CHARITY A. STERLING

The past is our teacher. Methinks I see the great arch of improvement that spans the stream of time from the beginning until now, and as I stand gazing upon this grand structure whose foundation stones are society, religion and education, and observe how each piece has been hewn by the hand of Providence until it fits perfectly in the great span.

"What a wonder!" the world exclaims. "How comprehensive are the plans of Him in whose hands are the destinies of individuals and nations." The first stone for which we are indebted laid in one side of this beautiful wall is society. Compare this with the past. Look at the great improvement. How stone after stone of personal freedom, political and social progress, has been placed upon this one great corner until it alone forms one part of our indebtedness to the past. What does not our government owe to the past? What does it not owe to its past heroes, past struggles and suffering? Read of the monarchs of the long ago and you will say that the sweet influence of heaven has been changing the arch of society until it is now finished and brightened by the keen intellect of the nineteenth century. Finance is the pier of our government. This, too, is due to the work of the past and we are indebted for the great commercial advantage that rolls the revenue and custom into an almost inexhaustible treasury.

But other stones are hewn and fitted into the arch. These are the vast institutions of learning where millions of children are being educated. Are we not indebted for these to the past's great benevolent men? Go with me if you please to the little red school house where you first learned to read and spell and from this step by step as time advanced, broad fields of knowledge opened up before you until now as one happy band of eager inquirers we receive knowledge from an efficient faculty, normal or academic and from here still higher institutions are ready to receive us. Colleges and universities say "Come, we will fit you for any vocation of life."

But this is not all. Where are the charitable institutions that dot every community, city or town? These are the societies for which the poor, the crippled and the outcast are indebted, and yet these are but stepping stones to a more noble organization. Bands of worshipers are gathering in the magnificent buildings whose spires point heavenward to remind us that a great refining power has been going on in the

United States. Numerous churches are sufficient to tell the story. Many other advantages of our present society wrought out on the religious battle field of the past might be cited and yet only one side of our arch is complete.

We now turn to place the corner stone upon the other which is education. Compare this with the past. Is there not an improvement? What was our knowledge without literature, the foundation of education? It is thro this that we become acquainted with the long ago and how eagerly we read the history of a great nation, perhaps never thinking how much we are indebted to the writer who toiled for years that we might improve. Here, too, are the oracles of the past. How much we appreciate them. Oh, Webster! Webster! thy words have been as magic in accomplishing much good. Can we be so ungrateful as not to feel indebted to thee?

But another stone lying close to that of oratory is poetry. Softened by the sweet dews of imagination and brightened by the glowing rays of a lovely sunset of expression, its beauty sinks deep into the soul while the mind of the reader is lost in fairy land. But time thro years of struggle and mental darkness has prepared the great rock of science and placed it in equal space with that of literature. This, too, is a mighty factor in our indebtedness to the past. What would our education be without it? By philosophy we are able to fathom the depth of mystery and comprehend the laws by which the machinery of the whole universe is controlled. Are we not indebted to Bacon for his fine inductive reasoning and to Franklin who brought from the clouds the lightning that has grown into such brightness as illumines even now the entire world of science and art? Methinks I hear you say yes.

But still farther we go. Man has gone into the depth of the earth and inspired by science has prepared the way that we may know every strata of material that forms this great ball upon which we tread; and by mathematics and astronomy Sir Isaac Newton, perhaps one of the greatest thinkers of the past, has given us the golden cord by which we may measure the distance of the sun, moon, and stars and to be able to see the circular path by which every planet revolves around this great center.

Now let us loosen the bands of education and place art along with literature and science then "knowledge is power." Immediately philosophy is made practical and improvement almost takes wings. Electricity and steam are utilized, cars, boats and news go floating all over our land until the most remote places are civilized. The brush and chisel speak to us. It is they that bring

out beauty and form. It would take but a few strokes with the brush of a Raphael or the chisel of a Bandel to picture upon the arch of the present all our indebtedness to the past. When our souls are burdened with care and we sit meditating over the unpleasant things of life, how charmingly sweet come the tones of music to our weary minds. The harsh and cruel treatment of some supposed friend is forgotten and we are happy once more. To the past again we look for much inspiration. There is Mendelssohn in whom we find our ideal, one whose tones are but reflections of a pure soul that dwells within and by whose sweet music and loving heart we build the last side of the structure which takes but one more stone to complete the arch.

What is it? Ask yourselves the question. Think of man in his fallen condition. Who redeemed him? The Son of God. He who came and bled and died upon the cross for our sins. Christ the keystone, perfected by the hand of an Almighty Father and came upon earth to bind together the great arch of all our indebtedness to the past. It is thro Him that we have enjoyed all these great blessings and by our energy, loyalty and system we will make future generations indebted for greater positions than we now enjoy.

WORKING FOR ETERNAL LIFE

ARTIE GARDNER

Yes, there is much work to do before we can enter the golden gates of heaven, enough to keep us busy every moment. Jesus was never idle; he worked while others slept. Work while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work. Oh, how true, we should never stop; it is much easier to work while the sun shines. Is it shining in our souls today or are we at leisure? We can help win souls for Christ, let us not let our ministers do it all. We can speak a word for Jesus. It fills my soul with joy to read of the precious souls coming to taste of the water of life. How the angels rejoice and how the Father has loved us, that he gave His only begotten Son that we might live thro him and have eternal life. We may think we have trials and temptations, but Jesus said I will deliver thee out of them all, and would never leave us or forsake us. He is ever willing and ready to help and save us if we will only trust Him, and not ourselves; for we know that without God's help we are but weak creatures.

We think it is an awful burden to bear when one of our dear ones leave us to cross the river of death, but they have gone to accept their eternal life. Jesus has called them unto him. And oh, what joy and gladness there will be when we all meet again never to part. What a blessed work we have to do,